

Message Text

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SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL LABOR IN AUSTRIA

REF: STATE 270315

1. FOLLOWING RESPONDS TO CORRESPONDINGLY LETTERED PARTS
OF THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF REFTEL:

A. THE RIGHT OF FARMS LABORERS IN AUSTRIA TO ORGANIZE
AND TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY IS PROTECTED UNDER A SPECIAL
STATUTE ENTITLED "AUSTRIAN AGRICULTURAL LABOR LAW OF
1948," A COPY OF WHICH IS FORWARDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER.
IN GENERAL, THE 1948 LAW PROVIDES FOR FARM LABORERS
EQUIVALENT RIGHTS IN MOST RESPECTS TO THOSE ACCORDED
NON-AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNDER OTHER LEGISLATION. AN
AMENDMENT TO THE LAW OF 1948, ENACTED NOVEMBER 28, 1974,
WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1975. IT EITHER IMPROVES
OR ADDS PROVISIONS RELATED TO:

- SICK LEAVE WITH PAY;
- HOLIDAY AND LEAVE PAY;
- SEVERANCE PAY;
- REDUCTION OF THE WORK WEEK; AND
- INCORPORATION INTO THE AUSTRIAN AGRICULTURAL
LABOR LAW OF 1948 PROVISIONS OF THE LABOR CODIFICATION

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LAW OF DEC. 14, 1973.

AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF A SUMMARY OF THE LABOR CODIFICATION LAW IS ALSO FORWARDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER. THE TEXT OF THE NOV. 28, 1974, AMENDMENT TO THE LAW OF 1948 WILL BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS AVAILABLE.

B. THE AUSTRIAN STATUTE ON TRANSFER TO AUSTRIAN SOCIAL SECURITY LAW OF WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY OF 1947 PROVIDED FOR INCORPORATION OF FARM LABORERS INTO THE AUSTRIAN SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE AUSTRIAN GENERAL SOCIAL SECURITY LAW, IT BROUGHT FARM LABORERS UNDER THE SAME HEALTH, PENSION, WORKMAN COMPENSATION. AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PROGRAM THAT APPLY TO OTHER AUSTRIAN WORKERS. THE AGRICULTURAL LABOR LAW OF 1948 EXTENDED PROVISIONS OF AUSTRIAN LEGISLATION ON CHILD LABOR TO THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

C. THE UNION FOR WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (GEWERKSCHAFT DER ARBEITER IN DER LAND UND FORSTWIRTSCHAFT) IS THE ONLY UNION FOR FARM LABORERS IN AUSTRIA. IT HAS ABOUT 25,000 MEMBERS AND IS ONE OF 16 UNIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE AUSTRIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (ATUF). ATUF AND 15 OF ITS CONSTITUENT UNIONS, INCLUDING THE AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY WORKERS, ARE CONTROLLED BY A SOCIALIST-ORIENTED MAJORITY, BUT EACH ATUF AND EACH SOCIALIST-CONTROLLED UNION HAS A SIGNIFICANT CHRISTIAN (OR CONSERVATIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY-ORIENTED) FACTION.

D. IN THE 1970 CENSUS THERE WERE 368,000 FARMS IN AUSTRIA WITH AN AVERAGE OF 52 ACRES PER FARM. FARMS OF LESS THAN 12.4 ACRES NUMBERED 157,600; 12.4 TO 50 ACRES, 138,400; 50 TO 125 ACRES, 57,100; 125 TO 500 ACRES, 11,800; OVER 500 ACRES, 3,100. BETWEEN 1960 AND 1970 THE NUMBER OF FARMS DECLINED BY MORE THAN 34,000 UNITS. ABOUT 135,000 SMALLER-SIZED FARMS IN MOUNTAIN AREAS SPECIALIZE IN CATTLE RAISING, DAIRYING AND TIMBER OPERATIONS. LARGER FARMS, SITUATED MOSTLY IN LOW-ALTITUDE PLAINS OR HILL COUNTRY, ARE MORE DIVERSIFIED, WITH EMPHASIS ON GRAIN, SUGARBEET, PORK, BEEF AND POULTRY PRODUCTION. THE EXACT NUMBER OF FARM LABORERS IN AUSTRIA IS NOT KNOWN;
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HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE SEASON, THE AUSTRIAN SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION CARRIES ON ITS ROLES FROM 35,000 TO 65,000 EMPLOYEES IN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY. ABOUT HALF OF THEM ARE BELIEVED TO BE FARM LABORERS. THE RECENT ANNUAL AVERAGE OF ABOUT 46,000 WORKERS ON RECORD WITH THE SSA ACCOUNTS FOR APPROXIMATELY 1.7 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL LABOR FORCE (EXCLUDES SELF-EMPLOYED).
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